Beautification of temple in Himachal Pradesh for tourism

1446. SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any proposal for upgradation/beautification of Mata Durga Hatkoti Temple of Shimla, Himachal Pradesh on the pattern of Vaishno Devi temple;

(b) if so, the details thereto; and

(c) whether Government would include this temple in National Tourism Map as this is an ancient/famous temple of Himachal Pradesh and millions of devotees come here?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Development and promotion of tourism is primarily the responsibility of State/U.T. Governments. However, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India extends Central Financial Assistance for tourism projects based on the proposals received from them complete in all respects as per the scheme guidelines, *inter-se* priority and subject to availability of funds.

Special Tourism Zones

1447. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up Special Tourism Zones;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Development and promotion of tourism is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism however, provides financial assistance to State Governments/Union Territories for tourism projects based on the proposals received from them subject to availability of funds and *inter-se* priority.

Visit India Year 2009

1448. SHRIMATI T. RATNA BAI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has launched the Visit India Year 2009 to attract more foreign tourists;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the response received so far?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (c) A "Visit India 2009" Scheme has been announced by the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with all stakeholders including airlines, hotels, tour operators, State Governments for incentivising travel of India. The incentives being offered by the stakeholders to all tourists from overseas, include complimentary air tickets, hotel rooms, local tours, etc.

Due to these initiatives, the downward trend in foreign tourist arrivals to the country has shown marked improvement with the month of June, 2009 registering an increase of 0.2% in foreign tourist arrivals to the country as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year.

Muziris Heritage Circuit

1449. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Competent authority of Kerala had submitted a project 'Development of Muziris Heritage Circuit' on 26th February, 2009 under Circuit Development Scheme;

(b) if so, the action taken on the above submissions in detail;

(c) if so, whether above submissions would be considered affirmatively;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. A project proposal for development of Muziris Heritage Circuit connecting Historically and Archaeologically important places in Kodungalloor as a mega project, was received during 2008-09 at an estimated cost of Rs. 6775.00 lakh. Since the project was not as per scheme guidelines of the Ministry of Tourism, hence it was not sanctioned.

During the Eleventh Plan, the Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned projects worth Rs. 7393.83 lakh for integrated development of tourism in the State of Kerala which also includes a project for the Development of Kodungalloor Heritage Tourism Circuit with Central Financial Assistance of Rs. 361.75 lakh.

Hotel rooms for Commonwealth Games

1450. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has made arrangements for rooms in hotels/motels to address shortage of accommodation for tourists in National Capital during Commonwealth Games 2010;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of new hotel projects sanctioned and construction works going on?